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SUBJECT: KUNAR AND NURISTAN PROVINCES HOLD JOINT SHURA

¶1. Summary. Kunar Governor Wahidi and Nuristan Governor Jamaluddin convened in Asadabad the first-ever joint shura of some 250 tribal elders and local officials representing the border districts in both provinces. The gathering focused on the serious security challenges along the Kunar-Nuristan border and the need for joint action to counter the &foreign Taliban threat.8 End Summary.

Inter-provincial Shura Blames
Insecurity on &Foreign Taliban8

¶2. On March 26, a first-ever inter-provincial shura was held in Asadabad (capital of Kunar province) which brought together 250 tribal elders and local officials from Kunar and Nuristan provinces to discuss the security threat to the two provinces. The shura was generally supportive of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), coalition forces, and the Afghan government, and blamed insecurity on &foreign Taliban8 from Pakistan.

¶3. A common theme was the need for Afghans to unite to work with the international community to defeat insurgents. Even though Afghan Taliban are easily manipulated by foreign Taliban, the shura encouraged tribal elders to reconcile them. One representative said that when united, Afghans can defeat any foreign invader, including these foreign Taliban. Another said that Afghans must take responsibility for their own security before America pulls its troops out of Afghanistan, as they are doing from Iraq. There was some dissension between the representatives over which province contributes most to instability in the region, but Nuristan Governor Jamaluddin successfully persuaded the delegates to stop blaming each other and focus on the real problem of insurgents penetrating villages in both provinces.

¶4. Both governors said they were extremely pleased with the high level of participation and debate at the shura; they were confident border cooperation would improve as a result of the initiatives launched at the shura. The border district representatives agreed with the governors, proposal to form a 15-person permanent shura comprised of religious, tribal, and former mujaheddin representatives from the border districts. The joint shura would convene on a monthly basis to address security problems on both sides of the border, and would select a representative to attend the coalition-sponsored monthly governors' conference.

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